

News Release

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Committee announces decision on reorganized NCED's participation in the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program

The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (Committee) will allow a reorganized National Center for Employment of the Disabled (NCED) to participate in the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program -- under new leadership, with several strict conditions and rigorous monitoring, announced Robert M. Hartt, Committee spokesman. The JWOD Program, which the Committee administers, provides employment opportunities to people who are blind or have other severe disabilities in the manufacture and delivery of products and services to the Federal Government, through participating nonprofit agencies.

The Committee denounces the violations of its statutory and regulatory requirements by the previous NCED management team and Board of Directors. At the same time, the Committee believes that displacing hundreds of direct labor employees, who have documentation of severe disability and are not competitively employable, is unwarranted and inconsistent with the Program's mission to create and preserve jobs for this segment of the disabled population most in need. With the opportunities and vocational support provided through the JWOD Program, these employees remain capable of producing many critical products needed by the U.S. military and other Government agencies.

The Committee finds sufficient evidence and commitment from the new NCED leadership that the nonprofit agency should be able to achieve full compliance with the JWOD statute and the Committee's regulations. The Committee has established several identifiable and quantifiable conditions that must be met by NCED in the short term, to ensure that the necessary corrective actions have been taken, and that there is sufficient organizational detail to verify both the new NCED structure and the downsized workforce's capabilities. More frequent compliance audits of the new NCED will be performed by Committee staff or its designated agents in the near future. Failure of the reorganized NCED to meet the Committee's milestones or to maintain compliance with the Committee's conditions will be grounds for removal from the JWOD Program and/or reallocation of the entity's JWOD work.

"The Committee's decision addresses the gravity of NCED's past non-compliance, while establishing specific parameters and monitoring that would permit the restructured nonprofit agency to continue employing qualified people with disabilities through JWOD Program work. In doing so, the Committee was careful to balance its inherent goal to preserve the jobs of many people who are severely disabled with its responsibility both to require compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements and to ensure a satisfactory level of capability to furnish items to the Government," said Mr. Hartt.

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The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is the independent Federal agency that administers the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program, which creates jobs and training opportunities for persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities. National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH (serving people with a range of disabilities) are two nonprofit organizations designated by the Committee to help Federal agencies and nonprofit organizations that employ persons with severe disabilities participate in the JWOD Program. The Committee's primary means of achieving its employment goal is through facilitating Government purchases of supplies and services from nonprofit agencies employing such individuals.